

The Brethren Evangelist

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ASHLAND, Ohio, July 4, 1888.

A Querist Department.

An esteemed and godly brother sends to this office an inquiry whether a Querist Department could not be opened in the EVANGELIST, and to start the work along he puts forth these momentous questions:

What is Congregational church government in a gospel sense? This is a question that has not been satisfactorily answered to my mind. Is the salutation of the kiss a church ordinance, and if so when should it be practiced? Can a man belong to the church of Christ and also be a member of some secret, oath-bound society and be consistent. J. K.

We desire to say that the columns of this paper are always open to proper questions. Questions have been published, but they are usually of such a character that no person can satisfactorily answer them, or will lead into a discussion. Nobody knows who writes for this paper what "Congregational church government in a gospel sense" is. There are a thousands opinions of course, and ours is one of them, and we presume the father in Israel who offers this question has one also.

If the men who blazed the congregational principle of church government would have defined what they meant, a great deal of misunderstanding and censure would have been avoided and somebody would know more about it. We might define congregational church government in a gospel sense, but if we defined it, some on might admire the beauty of the chime and jingle it over again; but if he was called upon to practically apply church government, he would follow the tricks in which he was trained, swallow his own public declarations and prove that his words did not imply what he meant.

It has not been defined in what sense we are congregation-but we want to be gospel.

We believe in just one form of church government, and that is to have every congregation choose its own elder or overseer, put the New Testament in his hands, and on all questions he shall decide what the law and testimony is. Where there is an honest difference upon the matter of keeping any observance, among members, that difference shall be honored and the right of conscience respected. Thus the elder shall grant to conscientious sisters the right to

wear a covering if the custom of his church does not require it. If brethren are conscientious on the double mode of footwashing, the elder shall allow them to hold their communion and satisfy the demands of their consciences and understanding. If there is a difference in views about holding the Lord's Supper, and brethren are conscientious, allow each to hold their communion as they see proper. To try to make them do either against the consent of their consciences is a double crime on the part of the elder, because he sins himself and then causes others to sin; for whatsoever is not of faith is of sin.

Where such liberty will not be granted, the fact should be plainly stated in a constitution. Under the congregational system every church should have its covenant principles or constitution.

If you are disposed to bicker about this principle, and say that it means any kind of baptism, do not forget when you stand in your own door it is your duty and right to say how a man shall come in your house. If you have a trine-immersion door, you have no right to admit by sprinkling, or single immersion. But after you admit a man once, then it is your duty to treat him courteously, Christian like, and as a shepherd would his own sheep. To bring a man into your church and then commence to ride him around and undertake to drive him like a dog, and demand of him that he shall enslave his conscience, stifle his good intentions and act as a paddy of stuffed human skin, is petty popery and satanic.

The principle of respecting the right of conscience, where there was difference, was honored in the primitive church, and in that way there was peace, although variety in methods.

We are everlastingly opposed to deceiving men to get them into the church. To do this and then try to force them into doing what they neither understood nor their consciences approve, when the conditions should have been plainly stated as a Christian duty, on the penalty of excommunication is the most sinful of all sinful acts.

We never believed the salutation was a church ordinance. It is an apostolic rule of greeting and a manifestation of brotherly love, and upon this premise it may be practiced wherever it is convenient.

The Secret Society issue is one which must be met in a manly, Christian and straightforward manner. Many of our churches have such members. They have been taken into the church in good faith, and to commence a tirade of abuse would not be right under these circumstances. If our creed is that persons who hold lodge fellowship will not be held in church fellowship, then the fact should be plainly set forth in a code of rules and put to every applicant for membership. Then each one will know what is expected of him; and applicants will not be deceived.

Whether a man can be consistent or not, we are incompetent to answer. The lodge system is extensive and its character under different circumstances and different places is greatly changed. We never yet have learned the character of the pledge that members make on entering. We

believe there is nothing in the scriptures that deny to men the privilege of covenanting together to do good works. The question to settle is whether the alliance is an evil one or not. If it is then there can be but one side for Christians to take.

The oath is classed among the common sins in scripture.

We believe that each individual church should, in its principles, define its attitude toward these questions, and then the members will know what to do.

In our Christian work we teach men, that for Christ's sake, we ought to be wholly united to Christ, and on account of the secret character of the class of societies under examination, it is best to stand aloof from all. Consecrate your whole body, soul and spirit to Christ.

It is pertinent to add here the following from the pen of Rev. W. J. Shuey, who is at the head of the great publishing concern of the United Brethren, in Dayton, Ohio:

"Article III., Section I, of the amended constitution deals with the secret-combination question—the subject which has caused our communion more trouble than all others combined. The very fact that good men of all creeds have differed in relation to this question should alone prompt to charity and forbearance among God's people. The definition there given of a really sinful combination is plain and unanswerable. To make prohibitory to church-membership connection with any other kind of society than the ones described finds no warrant in the word of God. To meet the ever-changing aspects of this question the General Conference is clothed with full power to deal with it as the best interests of purity and righteousness may demand. We have long tried the absolute intolerance of all connection with all orders having any secret whatever. Instead of bringing us peace it has brought us confusion and division, and hence weakness in all our work for saving souls. Our position has proved itself untenable. The proposed amendment to our constitution will make reasonable and lawful the intelligent crystallization into discipline of the true sentiment of the Church with respect to this vexing subject. No member of the commission for one moment thought of sacrificing moral principle in the framing of this wise provision. It leaves the search of the General Conference for that moral principle which deserves protection untrammelled by blind prohibitions."

So far as our influence shall reach in casting the policy of this paper, it shall be to admonish believers to wholly consecrate themselves to Christ and abstain from the fellowship of the lodge, and to urge upon churches in their organization, to adopt a declaration of principles and say what the course of that church shall be, not only upon the lodge question, but upon all others of like character; and that said declaration of principles shall remain unchanged except by a unanimous vote of the members of the church.

This is the way we define "Congregational Church Government in a gospel sense."

An Interesting Will.

The Children's department contains a letter from Nellie E. Ross, which brings to publicity an interesting deed of a dear little boy who has gone to the other shore. It was his desire to be in the family of Children College Helpers, and now his sister becomes the executrix of his will. Dear little boy! May his name be kindly remembered.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Bro. S. Brumbaugh, M. D., of Dayton, Ohio, whose advertisement you see in this paper, agrees to donate one-tenth

of all proceeds resulting from the advertisement to the Ashland College. Therefore, all persons sending to him for treatment or medicines will please mention the fact to him, of having seen the advertisement in the B. E.

The *Vindicator* publishes an obituary of Mary Gump, aged 78 years. She was born in Bedford county, Pa. Also of Jacob Markley and Joseph Kinney.

No one needs to be exercised about changing our church name. No one is strongly advocating such a course. This question came up when there was talk of the Conservatives confirming the name as their own in their conference. They did not do so, and if those who do not favor a change are quiet, others will be quiet; but if they continue to agitate, there is a probability of an opposition arising who will eventually carry a change.

The *Vindicator* pays its respect to the resolutions of respect passed by the St. James convention, and says "they wished to honor the dead in a conservative body."

John Wise, R. H. Miller, B. F. Moormaw, Enoch Eby and S. S. Mohler are appointed a committee to straighten the kinks out of the divorce question, by next A. M. Can they close the door closer than did our divine Master? —*Vindicator*.

P. A. Sequin, an ex-Romish priest, is now publishing a monthly, at Chicago, Ill., called *The True Protestant*. "Any one desiring to learn the methods of Popery will find it a fearless exponent. It is published at \$1.00 per year. The following are the principles set forth:

Our principles can be defined as follows:
Loyalty to Christ alone.
Unity in Christ alone.
Vitality by Christ alone.
Locality for Christ alone.
Responsibility under Christ alone.
Liberty from Christ alone.
Catholicity through Christ alone.

It is said that misery loves company and it may be added that no one can get into a difficulty unless some others are in. The trustees of Hartsville College, a United Brethren institution thirty-seven years old says:

Dear beloved Brethren:—For eleven months this institution of the church has been under a judgment of the court. There remains yet but one month in which to redeem it. The Board has instituted measures by which it is hoped the College may be saved; but it will require prompt action upon the part of all its friends to accomplish this.

Then follows a long plea in its behalf.

According to the Year Book of the Disciples of Christ for 1888, they have 6,437 churches; 620,000 communicants; 4,500 Sunday schools, with a membership of 318,000, and a teaching force of 33,340; number of preachers, 3,263. The value of church property is \$10,168,361. The estimated annual increase of members with church is 47,600. The number of institutions of learning which have been received is twenty-nine—five universities, nineteen colleges and five institutes; but there are some fifteen or twenty from which no report has been received.—*Ex.*

The Methodist General Conference has changed the extent of pastorate from three to five years. This is certainly an advisable act. Constant changing of pastors is damaging to the best interest of churches, especially in cities. The rules to dismiss pastors for incompetency or failure in their work provides against continuing unsuccessful pastors.

The *Pearl of Days* for July, a monthly published in defense of the Christian Sabbath is brighter than ever. It is published at \$1.00 per year by Wilbur B. Ketcham, 71 Bible House, N. Y.

We would say to brother Stevens that he is looking at the eulogizing upon German Baptists from a wrong position. Do not forget that we should do good to our enemies, pray for those who despitefully use and persecute us. Another brother out west just recently got in our wool for abusing the Conservatives so badly. See how those brethren differ! Well we can not close our columns against the kindly mention of good German Baptists that our correspondents send in. We do not hate them. They are our brethren, and if we hate them we abide in darkness and are murderers. Bro. James Quinter had many excellent qualities, and we felt gratified that so many of our writers hurried forward to do honor to his name. Be of good comfort Bro. S.—it requires time to become patient and long-suffering. The whole

Dunkard church has been abusing us for the last fifteen years and it has made us good natured. We pay no attention to it and go along in the Lord's work, and after awhile they will turn around and praise us more bravely than they persecuted us, to a greater extent than our deeds justly merit. "Whatever is, is right," if we keep ourselves right.

This is harvest and people are busy but do not forget the College, and make preparations to pay your subscription.

Matters are taking on a good shape for a State Convention in Pennsylvania, and the date of the same will be announced in due time.

The Brethren Church at Carleton.

The Brethren church at Carleton, Neb., held its first love feast on the evening of June 16th. I was invited to be present, and started for the place a few days previous so as to enable me to stop at Beatrice, and Holmesville, on my way.

The brethren at these places knew nothing of my coming and there was no appointment for me to preach, but Bro. U. W. Miller called as many together at his house as he could find, and had a social meeting in the evening.

Bro. A. M. T. Miller is preaching for this church at present, but is much hindered in his work by bodily affliction. The church hopes to be able to secure the labors of an evangelist before long, and thereby increase its membership.

This church contains many zealous workers, and will by its zeal and perseverance ultimately overcome all the difficulties by which it seems to be surrounded. But I started to tell more particularly of the Carleton church and love feast. As I said above it was the first love feast the church ever held. The few original members that constituted the nucleus of this church did not have the opportunity of communing for many years, and the large bulk of what constitutes the church at present, had not even seen a communion in connection with the Lord's Supper before.

Bro. DeBolt thought about seventy-five of his church communed, but as is usual, it was impossible to get the whole church together upon such an occasion.

This church is in good working order; its Sunday schools is one of the best organized and promising schools it has ever been my fortune to meet with.

Bro. H. M. Lichty is the efficient superintendent, and every teacher seems to be a teacher that can teach, and every class is full, and all are eager to learn.

Bro. DeBolt has made a good record for himself as a pastor at this place, but he has peculiar qualifications for an evangelist, and would perhaps do more good for the cause in that field of labor. His efforts at Carleton and Davenport, have, however, been almost one continued effort of series of meetings, and he is preaching and baptizing continuously, so that his labors as pastor partake largely of revival work. The church considered that they stood in need of another deacon, and Bro. Spieher was chosen to that office and ordained by prayer and laying of hands; and in this case this ceremony meant also the laying on of hands and prayer, the acts being performed simultaneously it would be hard to see which ex-